

BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town Hall

May 4, 2005

Meeting Minutes

Attending: Co-chairs Richard Cheek and Lydia Ogilby, Paul Bell, Matthew Genta, Lisa Harrington, Michael Smith, Sharon Vanderslice.

509 PLEASANT STREET

Attending: Nushin Yazdi and Mehran Kardar, owners; Jil Westcott and John Bell, abutters.

Ms. Yazdi presented architectural plans for two small bedroom additions on the northeast and southeast corners of this house and a new deck on the south elevation—along with an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The plans also showed a new picture window on the back (north) face of the house. Michael Smith moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the renovations and Paul Bell seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

515 CONCORD AVENUE

The owners of this 1960s house, Laura Elvins and Mark Kohler, would like to repaint it. They have chosen two possible shades of blue from a palate of colors appropriate to a house built in the 1950s or early 60s. Test patches of both colors have been applied to the side of the house. Members were asked to stop by the house and then call or email the Co-Chair with comments on the paint choices.

25 SOMERSET STREET

Attending: Joe DeStefano, owner.

Mr. DeStefano came before the Commission to discuss appropriate styles of fencing for this Italianate house. He wished to erect a fence in his side yard, with a gate across the driveway that would swing open and shut electrically. Richard Cheek showed him designs for fences from 19th century publications and photographs from the SPNEA library of seven different types of fencing that might be appropriate for a 19th century house similar to this one. He said that simpler, more common fence styles would be most appropriate for a house of relatively modest size and detailing set in a rural area such as Belmont. Lisa Harrington said that any architectural detail on the fence should be simpler than the detail on the house. Mr. DeStefano said he would use the photographs as a guide and return to the Commission's next meeting with drawings of a fence approximately four feet high.

536 PLEASANT STREET

Richard Cheek reported that the Shields family wants to replace a kitchen window from Sears, which was installed by the previous owner, with a double-hung, four-light window similar to other existing windows on a Mansard-style addition to their Greek Revival house. An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness will be submitted at the next regular meeting.

162 WASHINGTON STREET

Attending: Richard Rosen, owner.

Mr. Rosen came before the Commission to seek advice on replacement of a cracked concrete sidewalk in front of this 1775 brick house, with additions dating to 1790 and 1980. He wishes to replace this public walk with 4-foot by 4-foot pieces of Chelmsford granite between 1 ½ and 2 inches thick, edged with granite curbing on either side. While there originally was no sidewalk in front of this house, there is precedent for this kind of sidewalk in the North End, Mr. Rosen reported. There is already a cobblestone driveway on the property.

Michael Smith asked whether installing granite sidewalk would set a precedent for other homeowners who wished to engage in private projects in a public right-of-way. Paul Bell pointed out that the installation of granite pieces was a reversible change and that the pieces could be lifted up whenever utility work was necessary. Lydia Ogilby, whose ancestor Abigail Stone once lived in the Rosen house, said she would speak to Public Works Director Peter Castanino to say that the Historic District Commission was in favor of the project and to ask whether Mr. Castanino was concerned about setting precedents for other property owners who might wish to install “custom” sidewalks.

624 PLEASANT STREET

Attending: James and Laura Erwin, owners; Declan Walsh, contractor.

The Erwins came before the Commission to seek permission to demolish a small walk-in pantry that had been added by a previous owner to the rear of this 1877 house and to install a picture window in its place on the original back wall of the house. They also wanted to add a new French door leading to an existing side porch. Any new windows would have true divided lights. Commission member Paul Bell said he had visited the property and determined that a Certificate of Appropriateness would be required to demolish the addition because a small part of it can be seen from the street, but that no Certificate would be required to install the new picture window or French door since neither of those walls is visible from the street.

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Historic District Commission will meet on May 14 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the offices of Equus Design on Common Street to finalize the wording of these guidelines for homeowners in the Historic District who are planning to update or renovate their houses.

TOWN HALL COMPLEX

Commission members discussed the appearance of new hand railings that have been installed at the entrances to the Homer and School Administration buildings, which seem thicker than necessary and historically inappropriate. Paul Bell suggested that private money could be raised to replace these railings with something more in keeping with the period.

WAVERLEY FIRE STATION

Lydia Ogilby reported that the Town had opened bids for the purchase and renovation of this historic building in Waverley Square.

MCLEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER

Richard Cheek reported that a 120-foot monopole had been erected on the McLean property just off upper Concord Avenue. However, the monopole has not been painted according to Historic District Commission recommendations that were submitted when it approved the tower last year. Mr. Cheek will call the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding this recommendation.

Minutes recorded by Sharon Vanderslice.